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## Polygraph: A Necessary Tool

The best response to The Post's June 28 editorial "Spy Detectors?" was a front-page story two weeks later, headlined "Routine Polygraph Opened Ghanaian Espionage Probe." The story detailed how a routine polygraph exam led to the investigation and arrest of a CIA employee who was charged with the unauthorized disclosure of classified information.

For more than 30 years, the CIA and National Security Agency have conducted a program of random polygraph exams of their employees. Although Department of Defense personnel have access to the same types of highly classified information, they are not subject to polygraph examinations. The editorial incorrectly states that the Young amendment would require counterintelligence polygraph exams of 4 million individuals. The amendment, being considered by a House and Senate conference committee, establishes a program of random counterintelligence polygraph exams of Defense personnel with access to classified national security secrets. The random aspect of the program itself is a principal deterrent. The only individuals given mandatory polygraph exams would be applicants for access to our most highly sensitive information.

The editorial states that "skillful liars" can fool the polygraph machine. Yet Christopher Boyce, a convicted American spy, told a Senate subcommittee, "Contrary to assurances to me by the KGB officer in Mexico City that they had ways to beat the polygraph, I knew I could not pass a polygraph and greatly feared it." Stanislav Levchenko, a former KGB major who defected to the United States, has said that the KGB does not have the resources available to train all of its foreign agents to beat the polygraph.

The critics can say all they want about the value of counterintelligence polygraph exams, but they are not the ones who have the awesome responsibility of protecting our national security. Until the critics become responsible for that security, let's give those who are the tools they need.

—C. W. Bill Young

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